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New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 60, 61 and 63-81 (*continued*)

Introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.4.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I have the honour of introducing to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.4, on "The nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas", on behalf of the following 65 sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahamas, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zaire and Zimbabwe. A revised version, A/C.1/51/L.4/Rev.1, with the names of all the sponsors, will be circulated shortly.

In the nuclear disarmament area, one of the most significant developments of the last decades is that, in several parts of the world, the nuclear option has already been ruled out. Nuclear-weapon-free zones have been formally established in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and subsequently in the South Pacific, with the Treaty of Rarotonga; in South-East Asia, with the Treaty of Bangkok; and in Africa, with the Treaty of Pelindaba.

The areas of application of these treaties, with the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, combine to free from nuclear weapons all the peoples of the southern hemisphere, as well as of the adjacent areas north of the equator where the treaties apply. Those States, in close consultation with their neighbours, have renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect — commitments which go above and beyond those accepted by non-nuclear States that are not members of nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. Those States have also committed themselves, *inter alia*, not to accept the stationing of nuclear weapons in their territories, reflecting the wish of their societies to safeguard themselves against the horrors of nuclear warfare. They have received, or will receive, security guarantees from the nuclear-weapon States, to the effect that those instruments of annihilation will never be used against them. Last but not least, all the members of nuclear-weapon-free zones are strongly supportive of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It is important to note in this context that the President of the United States, in his statement before the General Assembly in September, said that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

> "points us towards a century in which the roles and risks of nuclear weapons can be further reduced and

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ultimately eliminated". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 6th meeting, p. 1)*

We should all agree with that statement. In the twenty-first century, the whole world — southern and northern hemisphere alike — must be a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The security benefits of the absence of nuclear weapons will then be enjoyed by all States and peoples.

Meanwhile, our initiative aims at achieving recognition by the General Assembly of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such recognition should be considered as a confirmation of the commitments of the international community towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

This draft resolution, of course, does not create new legal obligations. It does not contradict any norm of international law applicable to ocean space, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. However, this draft resolution aims at recalling the need to respect existing commitments under nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties and their protocols; it asks all relevant States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of such treaties and protocols, and calls upon all States to consider further proposals for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The draft resolution will uphold the legal rule against acquiring, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against anyone, and in particular against members of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In addition, the promotion of the idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon-free will undoubtedly have a demonstration effect and add impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We expect all States that support nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament to sponsor and, next week, to vote in favour of this draft resolution.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.32 and A/C.1/51/L.24.

Ms. Laose-Ajayi (Nigeria): I wish to introduce the draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.32, on the United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services, on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Nigeria.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on this subject, the objectives of the fellowship training programme are varied, and they include providing young diplomats with a general background in disarmament and security-related issues; enabling them to gain confidence in discussing disarmament issues based on their knowledge and understanding; allowing them to improve their negotiating skills; and familiarizing them with the procedures and practices of disarmament negotiating and deliberating bodies. Over 300 diplomats, mostly from developing countries, have benefited from this programme. In fact, the programme, beyond introducing fellows to disarmament, actually serves to introduce many young government officials from the developing world to the whole United Nations system, with the result that some of the trained fellows today find themselves in other international forums both within and outside the United Nations, representing their countries in various areas of international relations. Today, the records also show that many developed countries find the training programme appropriate for their young diplomats. This goes a long way towards proving the relevance of the programme to the entire membership and agenda of the United Nations.

In light of that, we appeal to Member States to continue to accord the programme all the support and assistance that it needs in order to keep the number of fellows trained annually to that recommended in the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly and to ensure that the course content and duration are worthy of the programme's name and the high standard that has been its benchmark since its inception in 1979.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.32 is essentially similar to those of past years. In the preambular paragraphs, it notes with satisfaction that the programme has trained a number of public officials selected from geographical regions represented in the United Nations system and that many officials of developing countries have acquired expertise through the training programme.

In its operative paragraphs, it reaffirms the relevant decision on the programme, as contained in annex IV to the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly, and expresses appreciation to the Governments of Member States that invited the 1996 fellows to study selected activities in the field of

disarmament, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of the overall objectives of the programme.

The decision to biennialize reporting on the programme and consideration of the draft resolution necessitated a slight change in paragraph 4. The change merely spelt out clearly that the programme will continue to be implemented annually.

My delegation takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Governments of Japan and Germany for their invitation to the fellows in 1996, and also to the Secretary-General and the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for their continued support.

The support of all Member States is required in order to enable the training programme to continue to achieve its important objective. It is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as in previous years.

I also have the honour to introduce another draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.24, on prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes, on behalf of the Group of African States, France, Mongolia and the Russian Federation.

When this resolution was first submitted at the forty-third session of the General Assembly in 1988, many doubted its relevance to our work in this forum. However, they have patiently allowed it to pass year in year out. Concerns resulting from the 1986 accident at Chernobyl led to international cooperation in addressing nuclear safety, including the safe management of nuclear wastes. The recent Moscow summit on nuclear safety and security also helped to reinforce the importance of such cooperation.

We are glad that there is now a commitment to an international nuclear safety culture. We welcome the entry into force of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Convention on Nuclear Safety, which can only complement and reinforce existing instruments on the handling of radioactive wastes, such as the Bamako Convention for the African region, the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter, the Waigani Convention for the South Pacific region, and the IAEA Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste. We look forward to the promised three new legally-binding instruments which will, *inter alia*, contain basic rules concerning the safe management, including disposal, of radioactive wastes and even oblige States to submit periodic reports.

While we consider all this to represent a noteworthy development in matters dealt with in the draft resolution, we continue to call for progress at the Conference on Disarmament on the agenda item entitled "New Types of Weapons of Mass Destruction and New Systems of Such Weapons: Radiological Weapons". That will lay to rest the fears of the developing countries that they are being subjected to a subtle form of radiological warfare through exposure to radioactive wastes or dumping of radioactive wastes or materials on their territories.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution this year, note is taken of the commitment by the participants at the Moscow summit on nuclear safety and security to ban the dumping at sea of radioactive wastes. In its operative part, it welcomes their call on all States generating nuclear wastes with nuclear installations to participate actively in the preparation of the relevant convention on which the IAEA is currently working.

Apart from these two new additions, the draft resolution is the same as in past years. The sponsors of the draft resolution would once again appreciate its adoption without a vote, as in the past few years.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): The Middle East region is the cradle of civilization, rich in cultural heritage and spiritual enlightenment and the birthplace of three divine religions. It is normal for such a region to expound peace as a cornerstone of its contribution to human civilization. Yet the Middle East has been the theatre of strife and armed conflicts for over forty years.

It would therefore seem timely for us today seriously to embark on laying the solid foundations on which to proceed towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The consensus that has emerged in the General Assembly in respect of this proposal and the steadfast support it has received in bilateral declarations as well as in various multilateral forums are no doubt cogent testimony to the viability and to the relevance of this concept.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would greatly contribute to arresting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening the

security of all States in the region and, consequently, would be deemed to be an important confidence-building measure indicative of the common desire of all States of the region to live in peace.

At the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the study on effective and verifiable measures which would facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was presented for the consideration of this Committee. The study was generally well received as a useful and balanced approach to attain an important objective. In quoting the study, I would only refer to its conclusion, in which it is stated that:

> "There ... is no doubt that the goal can be reached; it is not an idle dream". *(A/45/435, para. 175)*

The study goes on to state that:

> "The effort required will be great, but so will the benefits of success". *(Ibid., para. 176)*

Though we fully realize that peace, security and stability in the region of the Middle East will be achieved only when a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is attained, it is essential to create the necessary climate and conditions to facilitate the achievement of this end result. In our view, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would contribute substantially to such a result. It is important to emphasize that the zone should not be viewed as nor reduced to a mere subsidiary factor. On the contrary, the objectives that it serves are fundamental in their own right by virtue of eliminating the threat of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East region.

In introducing draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28 under agenda item 67, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", I find it important to state that my delegation conducted wide consultations and exerted every possible effort to recognize two factors: the consensual dimension of the draft resolution, on the one hand, and the inevitability of reflecting relevant regional and extraregional realities, on the other.

In this vein, the twelfth preambular paragraph bears on the current state of affairs in the Middle East peace process by noting that the peace negotiations should be of a comprehensive nature and represent an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of contentious issues in the region. Furthermore, the thirteenth preambular paragraph develops a global level by taking note of the decisions adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its resolution on the Middle East.

It is our considered opinion that the time is now ripe to proceed towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. For this reason, paragraph 10 of the draft resolution endeavours once again to utilize the good offices of the Secretary-General to inject the required impetus into the process.

I would also like to invite the Committee's attention to the eleventh preambular paragraph and paragraph 9, in which reference is made to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This is a broader initiative that not only highlights the nuclear factor, but adds to it the chemical- and biological-weapons dimensions.

Since the announcement of this initiative by President Mubarak on 9 April 1990, it has been attracting an ever-widening degree of support. The Security Council adopted resolution 687 (1991) of 8 April 1991, which reiterates the need to work towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

It is our sincere hope that the States of the Middle East will work towards the implementation of both proposals simultaneously in order to eliminate the shadows of suspicion and mistrust.

Before concluding, in submitting draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28, I would like to reiterate that we have conducted extensive informal consultations on its formulation with all the delegations belonging to our region and with other interested parties in order to accommodate different concerns. In this spirit, conscious of the need to preserve the consensus that this resolution has enjoyed over the years and as a demonstration of flexibility and of general understanding on the part of my delegation, I would like to announce the following amendments.

First, the fourth preambular paragraph should be deleted, despite the fact that it represents a direct quotation of consensus language derived from the decision adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

Secondly, the phrase of paragraph 3:

> "and the statement made by the President and accepted by the General Conference on 20 September

1996 regarding the implementation of Agency safeguards in the Middle East",

should be deleted. We do so owing to the fact that the statement made by the President of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference on 20 September 1996 regarding the implementation of Agency safeguards in the Middle East is already reflected in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly last week under agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

Thirdly — and I wish to underline this point — we are still conducting consultations on the seventh preambular paragraph on nuclear safety. The result of these consultations with respect to the seventh preambular paragraph will be submitted by my delegation to the Committee in document A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.1 in due course.

I therefore commend this draft resolution to the First Committee and sincerely hope that it will receive the same support as in previous sessions and be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Pell (United States of America): On behalf of the Russian Federation and of the United States, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.45 entitled "Bilateral nuclear arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament".

Our purpose in presenting this draft resolution is to place on record the recent and positive developments in reducing our strategic nuclear weapons arsenals. Among other signs of progress since last year's resolution, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.45 notes that the United States has ratified the START II agreement and expresses the hope that Russia will do so soon. It also welcomes the removal of all nuclear weapons from Kazakstan and Ukraine, as well as the accession of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakstan to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as non-nuclear States.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.45 also indicates that much work remains to be done in this field and strongly encourages Russia and the United States to continue to give the highest priority to reducing further their nuclear weapons. It also encourages all nuclear-weapon States to consider appropriate measures relating to nuclear disarmament. In this regard, the draft resolution provides further impetus to the nuclear-weapon States to continue meeting their obligations under article VI of the NPT. And, perhaps most importantly, the draft resolution once again reaffirms that further progress is necessary to contribute to the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

I have to emphasize how much has already been done in the field of nuclear disarmament — much more than any of us could have expected even a few years ago. Russia and the United States have been and continue to be proud of this record of progress, which has not been easy to achieve. Let us take a brief look at the highlights.

First, an entire class of nuclear weapons has been abolished through the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty; secondly, START I has entered into force and reductions are proceeding more than two years ahead of schedule; thirdly, when START II is implemented, it will lower Russian and United States strategic nuclear arms to about one-third of pre-START levels; and fourthly, after START II is ratified, our Presidents have committed themselves to discussions on further reductions.

Time does not permit a reading of the far more extensive record of nuclear disarmament efforts to date. The facts are well known, however, and I would invite all United Nations Members to reflect upon them. Equally important, I would ask that all United Nations Members appreciate the fact that these efforts are accelerating. Even now, both countries are dismantling nuclear weapons as fast as is technically possible. Ways are being sought to speed up this process, within the bounds of concern for safety and environmental protection.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.45 points to a practical way to achieve nuclear disarmament under current circumstances: a step-by-step approach which includes all involved parties. Such an approach has produced measurable progress in the past. It is multilateral when it has to be, as with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, hopefully, with the upcoming negotiations for a cut-off of fissile-material production. It is regional when it has to be, as with the several nuclear-weapon- free zones recently concluded. And it is bilateral — even unilateral — when it has to be, as with the START Treaties and the several unilateral disarmament measures announced by Russia and the United States. This approach works. Let us not fool with it.

We all have a vital interest in nuclear disarmament. Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.45 recognizes that interest and encourages it in a very practical way. It deserves the support of all members of the international community, and

on behalf of the Russian Federation and the United States, I ask for that support.

Mr. Al-Masaad (Qatar)(*interpretation from Arabic*): Since this is the first time I am speaking in the First Committee, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this body. I am convinced that, given your diplomatic skills and knowledge of the issues before us, the work of this Committee will be fruitful. I am also pleased to extend congratulations to your fellow members of the Bureau and wish them every success.

The State of Qatar, together with many States of the Middle East, have on several occasions confirmed their commitment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in keeping with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session on disarmament and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which is 50/66, adopted by consensus on 12 December 1995. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in tension areas such as the Middle East, is the result of countries' coming together to commit themselves to freeing their region of tensions. Such zones strengthen international efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and pursue the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and are a major contribution to international peace and security. No one can deny the significant contribution to progress in nuclear disarmament of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, South-East Asia and, more recently, in Africa, following the signing on 11 April 1996 of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is in keeping with resolutions on the goals and principles of the NPT and nuclear disarmament adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which affirmed that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens international peace and security. Pursuant to those resolutions, the State of Qatar supported the draft resolution adopting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and was among the first to sign it.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the responsibility of the States of the region. Arab States, in particular the State of Qatar, would welcome the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. All of those States are also Parties to the NPT and approved its extension for an indefinite period. Israel is the only State of the region that has failed to do so. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conference of September 1995 highlighted the serious consequences for international peace and security of nuclear activities carried out in the Middle East not for exclusively peaceful purposes. That was a specific reference to Israel. Israel's adherence to the NPT and submission of all its nuclear facilities and installations to IAEA safeguards are vital to securing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, especially since a new Government has come to power in Israel.

Such a zone is essential if the peace process is to progress towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. It would lead to confidence-building in the region and to fruitful cooperation in all areas. It would further consolidate economic development, thus facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering the entire region. We have stressed the importance to the region's stability of establishing such a zone, given its contribution to peace and the economic and social stability of the region. The State of Qatar, under His Majesty the Emir of the State, has worked to strengthen its efforts and calls on other States to do their best to speed the establishment of such a zone in the region and to consider serious and mutually and effectively verifiable measures.

Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia): The opportunities for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament opened by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are being grasped by the international community. That has been fully reflected by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and South-East Asia, the adherence to the Protocols of the Treaty of Rarotonga by France, the United Kingdom and the United States, and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Taken together, these constitute meaningful steps towards the eventual worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons.

It is to be recalled that, in 1982, Indonesia proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia as an essential component of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. Meanwhile, in cooperation with other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and following a series of intense consultations, that proposal was finally consummated at the ASEAN Summit, held in Bangkok in December 1995, which adopted the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. The Zone encompasses the territories of all States Parties to the Treaty as well as the maritime areas under their sovereignty and jurisdiction, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The States concerned have undertaken to comply fully with the objectives and purposes of the Treaty, especially the commitments not to develop, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or control nuclear weapons and to utilize nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes under IAEA safeguards.

It is in this context that my delegation has decided to become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.4/Rev.1. The States of the African continent, the South Pacific, South-East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean share common interests and a firm determination to cooperate in transforming this large segment of the Earth's surface into a nuclear-free area and thereby to free themselves from the menace posed by nuclear weapons.

It is envisioned that the area of application would encompass the entire Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas. Declaring such a vast expanse nuclear free would provide impetus for the establishment of such zones where they do not exist, leading ultimately to a denuclearized world. However, such legitimate interests and concerns can become a reality only with the concurrence of the nuclear Powers and their ratification of the relevant Protocols. Hence, operative paragraph 2 calls on the countries concerned to exert efforts and to facilitate the full realization of the objectives contained in these treaties. It is hoped that, consistent with their responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, the nuclear Powers will undertake the necessary actions to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the States involved.

In my delegation's view, it is for these weighty reasons that the draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere warrants the support of the Member States.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.23.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): South Africa is honoured to introduce the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.23 on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, as submitted to the First Committee by the delegation of Burundi on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the African Group of States.

The successful conclusion of the signing ceremony of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Pelindaba), which took place in Cairo on 11 April 1996, is one the most significant events to take place in the area of disarmament for Africa since the previous session of the First Committee. We are particularly pleased that four of the nuclear-weapon States signed the Protocol to the Treaty simultaneously with African States in Cairo, while the fifth has indicated that it will do so in the very near future.

The draft resolution calls upon African States to sign and ratify the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty as soon as possible so that the Treaty can enter into force without delay. Secondly, it expresses appreciation to the international community and in particular to the nuclear-weapon States that have signed the Protocols that concern them, and calls upon them to ratify the Protocols as soon as possible. It also calls upon the States contemplated in Protocol III to the Treaty to take all necessary measures to ensure the speedy application of the Treaty to territories for which they are, *de jure* or de facto, internationally responsible and which lie within the limits of the geographical zone established in the Treaty.

The Treaty reflects the common ideal of African countries to see our continent free of nuclear weapons and represents an achievement of which all Africans can rightfully be proud. It is our conviction that the Treaty of Pelindaba will serve to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and encourage the establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. It is furthermore a step in our common goal to rid our world of these weapons.

Previous resolutions on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty have been adopted without a vote. The African Group of States commends this draft resolution to the First Committee and trusts that it will again be adopted by consensus.

While I am speaking, may South Africa express its support for draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46, which we have also co-sponsored, on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines, introduced by the United States on 4 November 1996. As representatives are aware, Africa is one of the continents which has suffered the most as a result of anti-personnel landmines. These terrible weapons have had a devastating effect on civil society after conflicts have ended and have placed severe constraints on reconstruction and development, particularly in rural areas. The scale of the problem is well known and the challenge it poses to our continent is extremely serious. South Africa is fully committed to ensuring the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world is a clear demonstration of the continued commitment of non-nuclear-weapon States to the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. This has now been enhanced through the initiative of Brazil to promote the Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas as a zone free from nuclear weapons. South Africa supports this initiative and has co-sponsored the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.4/Rev.1. With the addition of Antarctica, more than 50 per cent of the Earth's landmass will be covered by nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties — the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): The delegation of Egypt has the honour to introduce, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27, under agenda item 74, which is entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

This draft text is based on the resolution adopted last year by the General Assembly under the same agenda item. It does, however, take into account the prevailing political environment in the Middle East. The most relevant developments are the accession of Djibouti on 22 August this year to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the decision of Oman to sign the NPT as soon as possible, as announced by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman in his statement to the General Assembly on 1 October 1996. Such developments underline a basic fact in the Middle East, namely, that Israel has become the only State in the region which has neither acceded to the NPT nor declared its intention to do so in the foreseeable future.

The achievement of universal adherence to the NPT remains a cardinal priority not only for the States Parties; but also for the international community as a whole. Universality consolidates the edifice of the NPT regime. This was underscored in the Treaty itself and was subsequently confirmed by the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted on 11 May 1995 by the Conference of the Parties to the NPT, as well as by the provisions of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty. It is for these reasons that we consider Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT as an impediment to the realization of the lofty objective of attaining universal adherence to the Treaty.

Needless to say, the continuation of such an unbalanced situation cannot but further aggravate serious security concerns regarding the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. It will undermine the efforts deployed by various regional and extraregional parties aimed at establishing confidence-building measures, in particular those efforts aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as the cornerstone for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

In a volatile region such as the Middle East, peacemaking deserves our collective support. When the foundations of peace have been laid down, it is our common responsibility to build upon these agreements to allow them to widen and spill over into other areas, hence contributing to defusing tension. With this view in mind, we must underscore that the Arab strategic option of achieving a just and comprehensive peace requires that Israel make a corresponding commitment, and that this commitment be seriously and scrupulously confirmed in accordance with the principles agreed upon at the Madrid Conference, in particular the principle of land for peace, and the faithful fulfillment of commitments, undertakings or agreements made in that framework. Reneging on commitments is unacceptable as well as illegal.

This draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.27, consists of 10 preambular paragraphs and five operative ones. I will only call attention to the new changes that have been introduced. In the new seventh preambular paragraph, the General Assembly notes with satisfaction that since the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East on 11 May 1995 by the Conference of the Parties to the NPT, Djibouti and the United Arab Emirates have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and that Oman will become a party to the Treaty at the earliest date. In the new eighth preambular paragraph, the General Assembly notes with concern that Israel will be the only State in the Middle East — and this is a reality: the only State in the Middle East — that has not yet become a party to the NPT and has not declared its intention to do so. In the new ninth preambular paragraph, the General Assembly expresses its concern about threats posed to security and stability by the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region. And in the updated tenth preambular paragraph — which was the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 50/73 adopted last year — the General Assembly stresses the importance of undertaking confidence-building measures, in particular the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the

Middle East, in order to consolidate the non-proliferation regime and enhance peace and security in the region.

As for the operative part, the General Assembly welcomes, in an updated paragraph 1, the accession of Djibouti to the NPT and the decision of Oman, as expressed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman, to accede to the Treaty. In an updated paragraph 2, the General Assembly calls upon Israel, the only State in the Middle East region that is not yet party to the NPT and has not yet declared its intention to do so, to accede to the Treaty without further delay; not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons; and to renounce possession of nuclear weapons.

The General Assembly also calls upon Israel, in an updated paragraph 3, to place all unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as an important confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security.

Allow me to conclude by stating that the purpose of this draft resolution is simple and straightforward. It is to faithfully reflect the realities in the Middle East — the realities as they now exist. The draft resolution underscores the basic facts as we live them in the region: that following the decisions of Djibouti and Oman, Israel remains the only State in the region that is not yet or will not soon be a party to the NPT. This is a fact that cannot be challenged. Israel has not declared its intention to become a party to the NPT.

I believe that States of the area are justified and entitled to put questions to the international community. Are we expected to ignore realities and use what might be described as the ostrich approach, hiding our heads in the vast sand dunes of the Middle East? To whose interest would that be? It would not promote peace, stability or security. Or are we to conclude that in the Middle East, and only in the Middle East, double standards can be applied?

A few years ago, and as a token of our support for collective efforts, the title of this item was changed from "Israeli nuclear armament" to "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". This change by itself highlights the conceptual change from confrontation to confidence-building; this draft resolution does not aim at creating a confrontation between any delegations here. Now it is Israel's turn to make a positive gesture by joining all other States of the region in acceding to the NPT and adhering to the non-proliferation regime.

Egypt, on behalf of the States Members of the League of Arab States, hopes that this draft resolution will receive the overwhelming support of Member States. For this purpose — to make it possible for this draft resolution to receive the overwhelming support of members of this Committee — we have been and still are conducting intensive consultations with all the interested parties. We hope that our discussions will lead to a positive outcome at the beginning of next week.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Togo, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.26/Rev.1.

Mr. Afeto (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour of introducing, on behalf of the African Group, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.26/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa".

This draft resolution, drawn up by the African Group under agenda item 72 (d), "Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly", has been submitted by Burundi on behalf of 53 African States.

Established by the General Assembly under resolution 40/151 G of 16 December 1985 and inaugurated 24 October 1986 on the forty-first anniversary of the United Nations, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, based in Lomé, Togo, has as its fundamental mission to supply African States, upon their request, with functional support for initiatives they would like to undertake to promote peace, development, disarmament and arms limitation on the national and regional levels. With this mission, the Centre has distributed information on these issues to Governments, students, teachers, researchers and other people and entities with an interest in problems of disarmament and development. It has also organized many seminars, held conferences and conducted studies, including on the causes of conflicts and on the problems of borders in Africa.

During the last 12 months, and unlike in 1994 and 1995, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, despite its still limited resources, organized seminars and disseminated information throughout the regions and districts of Togo. It did so with assistance from the United Nations Information Centre and with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) in Lomé, and with the cooperation of the Togo Federation of Associations and the Clubs of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

It also lent its technical and administrative support to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and participated in activities conducted by the United Nations Secretary-General aimed at finding solutions to problems resulting from the proliferation of light arms in the Saharo-Sahelian subregion.

The Centre has also been involved in distributing its quarterly publication — *The Africa Peace Bulletin* — as widely as possible. It is published in French and in English and covers new developments in the area of disarmament and peace in Africa.

All information on and programmes of activities of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa is contained in the report of the Secretary-General of 25 September 1996 (A/51/403).

The Secretary-General's report reveals that the Lomé Centre's programme of activities is quite far-ranging and is in keeping with the mandate given it upon its creation by the General Assembly. However, it emerges from the report that the Centre's financial situation, which improved slightly during 1996, remains a source of concern.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.26/Rev.1, which I am submitting today for the Committee's consideration, believe that peace and security know no price. They believe, moreover, that the Regional Centre must play a primary role in helping to check this scourge, as their respective States are confronted with the phenomenon of the uncontrolled proliferation and illicit transfer of small arms.

In operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the sponsors express their firm support for the further operation and strengthening of the Centre and encourage it to continue intensifying its efforts in order to develop effective measures of confidence-building, arms limitation and disarmament.

An appeal is made in operative paragraph 4 to all Member States — mainly to African countries — to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to make regular and appropriate contributions to the special trust fund created to help the Centre cope with the problems of financing, in order to revitalize the Centre, strengthen its programmes of activities and facilitate the effective implementation of such programmes.

Operative paragraph 5 requests the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts in exploring new means for the adequate financing of the Centre's activities.

The sponsors believe that in order to allow the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to obtain more constructive results in future, it would be preferable for the Centre's Director to be, as far as possible and within existing resources, locally based. This is all the more urgent and justified since the Government of Togo is making available, at no cost to the United Nations and at its own expense, two buildings: one to house the Centre and its various services and the other to serve as a residence for the Director and the members of his or her family.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.26/Rev.1, in the light of all these considerations, request Member States to show their serious concern for the Centre's problems by providing it with the material and financial means that it needs to update, expand and effectively carry out its mandate, in accordance with the wish expressed by the Secretary-General in his report.

This is an important issue, and, for that reason, the sponsors hope that it will be given due attention by all delegations. They hope also that draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.26/Rev.1 will be adopted again this year without a vote, as was the case last year.

Mr. Rider (New Zealand): New Zealand is pleased to take this opportunity to speak in support of the draft resolution introduced earlier this afternoon by the Ambassador of Brazil, that is, the draft entitled "The nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas", which is attached to the text of the Brazilian intervention and which will appear shortly as document A/C.4/51/L.4/Rev.1.

As a sponsor of the draft resolution, I should like to thank the Brazilian delegation for the work they have put into bringing this draft resolution before the First Committee, and particularly for their efforts in coordinating the work of the core group that worked on the draft. New Zealand also worked closely with Brazil on the draft resolution, and I should like to take this opportunity to outline some of the thinking behind the initiative.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have, in recent times, made some considerable advances. The 10 countries of the South-East Asian region signed the Treaty of Bangkok in December last year. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty was opened for signature in April of this year. In my own region, the South Pacific, France, the United Kingdom and the United States have joined the Russian Federation and China in signing the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. These actions, and France's subsequent ratification of the Protocols, are much appreciated by South Pacific States.

These developments are noteworthy, and several countries — including New Zealand — saw an opportunity to build on the progress nuclear-weapon-free zones have made. While the provisions of the four Treaties are not identical and reflect the different regions and the different circumstances in which they were drafted, they all have as their core a prohibition on the acquisition, manufacturing, testing and stationing of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones now cover most of the southern hemisphere and significant parts of the northern hemisphere, and enjoy widespread support, both from regional States and from the nuclear-weapon States. We believe there is scope to develop political links between zones and to have that concept endorsed by the wider international community, thus reinforcing progress towards nuclear disarmament.

The New Zealand Prime Minister therefore welcomed Brazil's initiative to introduce, at this year's session of the General Assembly, a draft resolution on cooperation between nuclear-weapon-free zones. We see the draft resolution as a chance to further existing efforts to establish political linkages between the members of the zones in order to promote and enhance our core and shared objectives.

This process will give us an opportunity to make a real contribution to nuclear disarmament, marking a further development in the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones, following their endorsement last year at the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Let me dwell for a moment on what this draft resolution does not do, to try to dispel some concerns I have heard expressed. It does not try to extend or undermine international law through the vehicle of United Nations resolutions. In particular, there is no intention that the zones or their effects should impinge upon established international maritime law. That is made quite specific in the fifth preamoular paragraph. We want instead to look at ways we can work together to further our shared objectives and to consolidate the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zone regimes that now cover much of the globe, including most of the southern hemisphere.

Nor does the text attempt to pre-empt the outcome of current negotiations between one zone and the nuclear-weapon States. Operative paragraph 2 specifically recognizes this as an ongoing process and endorses it. We all hope that discussions have a fruitful outcome. Nor does this draft resolution lay the responsibility for follow-up on the already overburdened Secretariat or on the Secretary-General.

Operative paragraph 5 makes it very clear that we members of existing zones are ourselves responsible for carrying forward our desire for future cooperative efforts. In that sense, this draft resolution is a useful model for the First Committee to consider in future since it lays responsibility on the Member States concerned and not, as has usually been the tradition, on the United Nations.

New Zealand's objective during the drafting process has been to seek a text that would enable the draft resolution to gain maximum support without compromising its objectives. That would give the draft the weight we think it deserves. I would encourage all delegations to give favourable consideration to this text. As the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons made clear, the issue of nuclear-free zones is one of relevance to all countries. We look forward to the support of members of this Committee.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): Let me first present some of Israel's comments on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28 entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", which has just been introduced.

As the members of this Committee are fully aware, Israel has for the past decade joined the consensus on the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East. It did so because it identifies with the goal of establishing such a zone in the Middle East in due course. We have retained our position over the years while dissociating ourselves from the modalities contained in the draft resolution and maintaining serious reservations on its language and substance.

This year, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28 constitutes a drastic departure from the consensus language on which Israel's support was based. The new text is, in effect, a new draft resolution that calls for a new position.

I do not wish to elaborate on each change that was introduced. However, I do wish to make one fundamental remark in order to convey Israel's concern and apprehension. Israel's position has always been that the nuclear issue should be dealt with in the full context of the peace process in the Middle East, as well as within the context of all security problems, conventional and non-conventional. This has been a rudimentary concern on which our consideration was based.

The present draft includes several changes in the text that give it another direction. The strong reference to the importance of the peace process has been drastically diluted. Hence, we believe that such changes will adversely affect the peacemaking efforts in the Middle East and thus upset the delicate balance on which the consensus is based.

Israel continues to support the establishment, in due course, of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, after peace is sealed. Thus, the text of the resolution that was adopted during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly should remain unchanged if consensus is to be maintained. Support for this position will greatly help in maintaining consensus on this item this year as well.

I wish to add only a brief remark on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". This draft resolution is, regrettably, on the agenda of this Committee once again. It should have been removed from the agenda long ago on account of its negative political motive and in view of the fact that its substance is devoid of any subject not included in other resolutions. Therefore, I will not go into any substantive analysis of this draft resolution.

The draft resolution, as introduced today, represents an upgraded version of a negative attitude. On the one hand, my delegation has noticed a further proliferation of Israel's name in the text, thus escalating the singling out of my country. We have also noticed a deliberate omission of any reference to the peace process, which appeared in last year's text. Hence, I note with regret that this annual ritual has reached a new level. The continued arraignment and name-calling of Israel in this draft resolution does not serve the cause of peace and will no doubt have a detrimental effect on political developments in the Middle East.

We therefore call upon all those who supported or abstained on that resolution to vote against the draft and thus extend a helping hand to the peacemaking efforts in the Middle East.

Mr. Aguirre de Carcer (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like make a brief statement on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46 on "An international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines".

Spain wishes to join the already large number of countries that have indicated their intention to sponsor this draft resolution. My delegation had not yet announced its intention to become a cosponsor because the draft resolution made no reference to the need to determine the most appropriate international forum for the negotiation of such an international agreement. During the discussions on the final text of this draft resolution, many delegations asked that this additional factor be included.

Despite these flaws, Spain firmly supports the objective of the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines and has been working with the other members of the European Union to arrive at an effective international agreement on a global ban on anti-personnel landmines as soon as possible. To that end, my delegation would like sponsoring this draft resolution formally to join the many countries that share this objective.

Without prejudice to additional efforts that may be made in other forums, we wish to highlight what we see as the importance of the selection of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva as the most appropriate forum for continuing work on negotiating a legally binding agreement on a total ban on anti-personnel landmines.

Besides the Conference on Disarmament's function as the sole worldwide multilateral disarmament negotiating body, we believe that it is the only forum that can contribute to achieving as quickly as possible, the level of universality required to deal with this serious problem, which affects many countries on all continents. As the Permanent Representative of the United States pointed out just a few days ago in this Committee, the problems created by the wrongful use of anti-personnel landmines can be tackled only globally, and this objective should be shared by all Governments and all nations.

My delegation would like also to support the comments made by the representatives of Finland and France when they emphasized that we should work towards

an effective agreement that, consequently, should include appropriate provisions on verification of compliance.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation)(*interpretation from Russian*): Today our delegation would like to raise one of the important issues discussed in the First Committee: the ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

The Russian Federation is in favour of gradual progress towards this ultimate goal. A major step in this direction has already been taken: on 3 May 1996 in Geneva, Russia and other participants in the Review Conference of States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted amended Protocol II on mines by consensus. The agreement was based on a careful balance of the interests of all participants in the Conference, with due regard to the current situation, the real capabilities of the parties and their security and self-defence interests.

On the basis of the same position of principle, Russia became a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.40, which was introduced by Sweden. We believe that this draft resolution is aimed at achieving the main immediate objective: the entry into force of the Protocol, strengthening its authority and making it as universal as possible. This would provide an opportunity to move forward resolutely and predictably by consistently and gradually intensifying efforts in this direction. However, we believe that any attempts to achieve a hasty ban on mines, to mention the conclusion of negotiations that have not yet started and even to set out a timetable for their completion will only complicate this already complex issue. This would give the impression that attempts are being made to revise the agreement reached last May in Geneva.

Russia, no less than other countries, understands the humanitarian element of this problem. We share feelings of solidarity with the innocent victims of anti-personnel landmines, which have been expressed here in many statements. We believe that this solidarity should be demonstrated not only in words but in deeds. Mine clearance efforts should be intensified, and moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel landmines should be imposed and maintained. That is why we are proposing the establishment of international cooperation in mine clearance as an important integral part of resolving the complex challenge of post-conflict settlement.

The United Nations has a key role to play in coordinating the efforts of States and regional organizations to implement mine-clearance programmes. The problem of mine clearance is also urgent and pressing in the zones of conflict in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, primarily in Abkhazia, Georgia. However, proposals for an immediate and complete ban on production, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines give rise to a number of questions, some of which I would like to refer to.

First, how much will the cost of guarding frontiers increase if anti-personnel landmines are banned without adequate substitutes particularly at "hot spots" where, virtually every day, bandit groups make incursions from foreign territory? How many of the troops guarding those frontiers will lose their lives? Will not such a ban diminish the reliability of the protection of nuclear and other facilities that are dangerous or highly vulnerable to terrorists, particularly in circumstances where there is still no viable alternative to anti-personnel landmines? Will it not result in a situation in which the forces of law and order and lawful armed units are deprived of the possibility of using anti-personnel landmines, while illegal and mafia-like terrorist structures gain a kind of monopoly over them?

Secondly, will not the blanket, ill-prepared banning of anti-personnel landmines lead to a leap in the profitability of the underground mine business? If, as is often said, one anti-personnel landmine now costs $5, will not its price on the black market increase many times as a result of the ban, with a corresponding increase in the profitability of production, supply and so on? What forces and resources will be required effectively to combat such a profitable underground business? How much will it cost, for example, to verify that any workshop producing accessories for fireworks does not at the same time engage in the illegal production and sale of anti-personnel landmines?

Thirdly, how will it be possible to verify the ban on anti-personnel landmine production, especially when there is, for example, no ban on the production, stockpiling and use of anti-tank mines? Where and how will the demarcation line be drawn? What kind of on-site inspections should be provided for in order to make sure that a munition plant does not produce anti-personnel landmines, without jeopardizing the production of other legitimate items in such a plant? How will it be possible to verify the absence of anti-personnel landmines but not of other types of mines in military munition depots and military units? Will not such a verification system be much

more cumbersome, costly and intrusive than the verification system provided for in the Chemical Weapons Convention?

I should mention that we noticed that during the current debate some delegations stated that an agreement on anti-personnel landmines should be a simple one and not provide for complicated verification mechanisms. In our view, this means only one thing: that the ban is perceived as totally unverifiable, since a simple and inexpensive verification of such a complicated ban is totally inconceivable. We must have the answers to these and other questions before we sit at the negotiating table and start drafting the text of an agreement on a relevant ban.

In this context we believe that the use of the Conference on Disarmament as a forum to discuss the issue of mines is a feasible option, and we are open to it. The Conference provides an opportunity for an in-depth analysis and discussion of these issues, which clearly cannot be achieved in a short diplomatic meeting. However, the specific subjects for and timetable of the discussions at the Conference on Disarmament should be decided taking into account the entire group of problems that may soon be proposed for discussion there.

The other option under discussion — namely, to hold a special meeting of the countries concerned to agree upon the text of a "simple" agreement, and have its results endorsed by the General Assembly — would be a road leading nowhere. In the long term it would deal a blow not only to the goal of the anti-personnel landmine ban, but to the entire negotiating machinery in the field of disarmament.

The Ottawa meeting, held in October 1996, showed what sort of participation can be expected. Forcing through a anti-personnel landmine ban outside and contrary to normal procedures and mechanisms for working out global agreements in the field of disarmament is not acceptable to us. Moreover, it is hard to imagine that the major Powers could accede to an agreement drafted without their participation.

In this connection, the Russian delegation understands the arguments advanced by our Indian, French and Finnish counterparts in support of the Conference on Disarmament and a phased solution of the outstanding issues. Such a phased approach would mean that the first step would be the entry into force of the amended Protocol II on mines and widening adherence to it, followed by agreement on stricter limitations.

It is regrettable that these fundamentally important arguments relating to the eventual role of the Conference on Disarmament and a phased progression towards the ultimate goal were not reflected in draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46, which also failed to take into account the amendments proposed by the Russian delegation to the sponsors. Given these circumstances, we are firm in stating that, in conformity with our instructions, we will not be able to endorse or consent to a consensus with regard to that draft resolution, which ignores the Russian proposals.

We believe that, in the end, only general agreement, taking into account positions and legitimate interests on security issues as well as the real capabilities of all countries and regions, will make it possible to achieve solutions that would genuinely serve to strengthen universal, international security and trust as regards anti-personnel landmines.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Poland to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.48 and A/C.1/51/L.25.

Mr. Dembinski (Poland): I should like to introduce two draft resolutions. On behalf of Poland and Canada, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.48, entitled "Status of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", which is also sponsored by India and Mexico. I might add that, in accordance with a years-long tradition, Poland and Canada used to alternate every year in preparing and submitting such a draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors. As the tradition also had it, those draft resolutions used to command the universal support of the Assembly and were adopted without a vote. It may be recalled that this was not the case at either the forty-ninth or fiftieth sessions of the General Assembly, when draft resolutions on chemical weapons could not be, and were not, acted upon by the General Assembly.

The situation with regard to draft resolutions on chemical weapons at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly is fundamentally changed. With the required 65 instruments of ratification deposited late last month, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction will go into effect in late April 1997. At that moment, an entire category of weapons of mass destruction will have been banned, and the risk to mankind of renewed use of these horrendous, inhumane weapons

will have been eliminated. At that moment, the Chemical Weapons Convention will have become part and parcel of international law.

The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.I/51/L.48 consider that at that moment the chemical weapons implementation mechanism at The Hague must be ready and fully prepared to cope with its responsibilities. They also stress the importance of the further increase in the number of original parties to the Convention.

The sponsors have recognized that in 1996 the time has come for the General Assembly to pronounce itself on the subject of chemical weapons and to adopt, hopefully by consensus, a resolution addressing the relevant issues. It is in an effort to reach a meeting of minds of all concerned that, thanks to your understanding and indulgence, Mr. Chairman, and those of the Bureau, we have been able to pursue our consultations past the agreed deadline. I need hardly add that efforts to have only one draft resolution acted upon in the First Committee and to have it approved without a vote will continue up to the last moment.

In conclusion, I should like to pay special tribute to the delegations involved in the difficult and often frustrating efforts to produce one agreed draft chemical weapons resolution. The determination, goodwill and flexibility that they invariably demonstrated should be recognized and appreciated, as should the constructive role that they played in the search for delicate balance and language acceptable to most delegations. On behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.48, I commend it for approval without a vote.

In my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to introduce a draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, which is contained in document A/C.1/51/L.25. At the outset, I should like to observe that, following intensive consultations, and in order to obtain the approval of the draft resolution without a vote, we have decided to drop the last preambular paragraph from the draft. The revised text of the draft resolution will be issued shortly. While strictly procedural, the draft resolution seeks to bring out the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. It welcomes the recent expansion in the Conference's membership and encourages it to continue further to review that question.

The draft resolution also encourages the Conference on Disarmament to make every effort to reach, at the outset of its 1997 session, a decision on its agenda and programme of work. I commend the draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.25, as orally amended, for approval without a vote.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As the depository country for the Treaty of Tlatelolco banning nuclear arms at the regional level, Mexico is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution introduced today by the delegation of Brazil on the nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.4/Rev.1.

We have been firm promoters of the establishment and strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones which, as stated in the preamble to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, are not an end in themselves but rather a means for achieving general and complete disarmament, an obligation that was unanimously recalled by the International Court of Justice. The General Assembly, at its first special session on disarmament, encouraged:

> "The process of establishing such zones in different parts of the world ... with the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons." (*resolution S-10/2, para. 61*)

We would highlight the importance of paragraph 4 of the draft before us, which calls upon the States parties and signatories to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Raratonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba to explore and implement further ways and means of cooperation, including the consolidation of the status of the nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas.

We understand the concept of cooperation, in its broadest sense, to include both the contracting parties to the various Treaties and the bodies set up under such instruments in the regular exchange of information and experience. We are convinced that these new means of cooperation will advance the ultimate goal of such Treaties, which, as I said, can only be that of attaining nuclear disarmament.

Allow me, in conclusion, to emphasize the fact that nothing in the draft resolution affects the norms and principles of international law that are applicable to the maritime area. We would urge all delegations to support draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.4/Rev.1, introduced by the delegation of Brazil today.

Mr. Deimundo (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina would like to refer to the draft resolution introduced earlier by the delegation of Brazil, entitled "The nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas".

As a sponsor of the draft resolution, which is annexed to the statement recently made and circulated by the representative of Brazil, I would note that it is the outcome of intensive consultations among the sponsors. These consultations were quite intensive, as it was necessary to reach consensus on the draft resolution. We believe that the new fifth preambular paragraph and the new operative paragraph 2 seek to reconcile contradictory positions.

The delegation of Argentina hopes that this draft resolution will be supported unanimously by this Committee.

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The draft resolution introduced by the Ambassador of Egypt under agenda item 67, entitled the "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East" and contained in document A/C.1/51/L.28, is of great importance to all countries of the region and of the world.

The establishment of such zones is indispensable to eliminating the risk of nuclear proliferation in an area that has experienced long-standing conflicts. Such a risk may persist if a single State continues to possess an arsenal of nuclear weapons, is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and refuses to submit its nuclear installations to the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These safeguards are an important confidence-building measure for all the nations of the region and enhance international peace and security. Israel's refusal to submit to them hinders the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The international community and the General Assembly have supported this position since 1980 through the adoption by consensus of the resolution on the establishment of such a zone.

The international community is tending, in the light of the international changes taking place, to eliminate nuclear weapons through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in several regions of the world, such as Latin America and elsewhere. In the Middle East, Israel is the only State preventing the establishment of such a zone, thus threatening international peace and security, in particular given the setbacks in the peace process created by Israel's failure to respect commitments concluded during previous stages of that process. This is impeding the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on the principle of "land for peace". Israel is continuing to misrepresent reality, failing to respect its commitments and distorting the truth. The peace process is being blocked by Israeli practices, which are hampering the implementation of a resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In its preambular and operative parts, the draft resolution before us emphasizes realities that cannot be denied or ignored but which we must seriously consider. It is not new, as some have claimed. The amendments made by the Egyptian Ambassador during his introduction on the draft resolution, in which he singled out Israel by name, reflect the reality that Israel is the only recalcitrant party and simply strengthens the language of the draft resolution.

My country attaches the greatest importance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, a measure that is indispensable for nuclear disarmament and to promoting the possibility of peace and international security. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as in the past.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): A few moments ago, the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Ambassador Elaraby, introduced draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.24 and A/C.1/51/L.28. We listened — with great interest, I must admit — to what was said by the representative of Israel, Ambassador Yativ, in his remarks on A/C.1/51/L.28.

I must admit at this stage that the statement of the representative of Israel surprised me in many regards and caused me a little bit of dismay on two grounds. First of all, in its presentation, this delegation made a few important conciliatory oral amendments to resolution A/C.1/51/L.28. Nevertheless, it seems that insufficient time was given to digest the importance and assess the significance of the Egyptian delegation's conciliatory remarks and amendments to this draft resolution. It is in that respect that we announce that revision 1 will soon be released; my delegation, I believe, presented the new amendments to the Secretariat.

We have announced that there is an ongoing process of negotiations and consultations with all, intra-regional as well as extra-regional parties — if not neighbours and partners — as we proceed towards the conclusion of the negotiations on this draft resolution. So I do not think that it is at all healthy to negotiate this draft resolution from the floor. I think what we need at this stage is quiet diplomacy

and an open mind. I do not think that what has been mentioned by my friend Ambassador Yativ augurs well for what I have just mentioned.

Secondly, I find myself somewhat puzzled by certain things he said in his intervention. He mentioned that Israel has supported relevant draft resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone for the last decade. Actually, the consensus on such draft resolutions goes back to 1980. If my memory serves me correctly, the first draft resolution in this area was introduced and inscribed on the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 1974. The farthest Israel went in voting on the draft resolution, before it was adopted by consensus in 1980, was an abstention.

They have argued on historical grounds that for the draft resolution on this subject to be implemented they needed to underscore that they should not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East. Secondly, they needed direct negotiations with the parties. Well, direct negotiations started in 1977 between Egypt and Israel. As a result of our 1979 peace treaty with them, it became possible for the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus in 1980. I think it is in our interest to preserve and build on the consensus on the resolution.

It is in that respect that I actually find myself perplexed in trying to understand what we really mean by saying that Israel supports the draft resolution but dissociates itself from the modalities. If we measure such a statement against a long period of support — from 1974 until now — I find myself at a total loss. I also find myself somewhat confused by language such as "after peace is sealed". What do we really mean by peace being sealed? Can we put that in operational terms, or is that one additional alibi, if I may call it that, or precondition or caveat being placed on the long process of putting this initiative into operational terms, to implement the relevant resolutions?

We have supported the relevant resolutions for a long time; we have long had agreed language on them; we have adopted them by consensus since 1974; we have had paragraph 63 (d), of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, in 1978, agreed to by all the parties. What is left is the political will of the parties to put the resolution in operational terms — not necessarily by beginning with direct negotiations, though we are ready to do so.

The least we can do at this stage is to begin a structured discussion. Even a structured discussion on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is not agreed to by Israel. I am not talking about negotiations; I am speaking of a structured discussion. If we take an example from the African initiative, for example, it is noteworthy that the initiative was started in 1964 and culminated, as the representative of South Africa mentioned, in Cairo on 11 April of this year, after a very long period of time.

Egypt is willing to work hand in hand with all the parties concerned, but we need to start a process of structured discussion.

Before concluding, let me just refer to another remark which was made by the representative of Israel. With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27, on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, he stated that there was a deliberate omission of reference to the peace process. Let me just state that the deliberate omission was made because the original, previous language said "encouraged by the recent positive developments" in the peace process. If we are speaking in 1996, in the light of the developments since the last session of the General Assembly, it is not at all possible to use the same language because, unfortunately, history attests to the contrary of that statement, and we have to be realistic.

I will, however, end with a question to our Israeli friends and colleagues. If they like references so very much, and if they so much dislike the omission, would the insertion of a mention of the peace process in A/C.1/51/L.27 make them change their minds? I wonder.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Russian*): There are no further speakers. We have thus concluded the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and security agenda items.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Russian*): I call now on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have become sponsors of the following draft resolutions:

A/C.1/51/L.1/Rev.1: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom;

A/C.1/51/L.2: Bangladesh, Cuba, Croatia, Estonia, Iceland, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Mauritius, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia and Spain;

A/C.1/51/L.4: Benin, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Zaire and Zimbabwe;

A/C.1/51/L.8: Kenya, South Africa and Sri Lanka;

A/C.1/51/L.9: Guatemala;

A/C.1/51/L.10: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand, Philippines and Thailand;

A/C.1/51/L.16: Bangladesh, Belgium, France, Germany, India, the United Kingdom and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.17: Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Venezuela;

A/C.1/51/L.18: Congo, El Salvador, Liberia and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.19/Rev.1: Bangladesh and Lesotho;

A/C.1/51/L.20/Rev.1: Bangladesh, Kenya and Singapore;

A/C.1/51/L.24: Monaco and Mongolia;

A/C.1/51/L.30: Cuba, Guatemala and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.31: Congo, Liberia and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.32: Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Congo; Guatemala, Kenya, Liberia, Mongolia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.33: Morocco and Turkey;

A/C.1/51/L.34: Australia, Guatemala, Iceland, Luxembourg and the Republic of Korea;

A/C.1/51/L.35: Benin, Japan, Liberia and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.36: Bangladesh, Chile, Egypt, Estonia; Iceland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Qatar and Sri Lanka;

A/C.1/51/L.37: Afghanistan, Brazil, Guyana, India, Iraq, Nigeria, Paraguay, San Marino, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United Republic of Tanzania;

A/C.1/51/L.38: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Lesotho, Malta, New Zealand, Niger, the Republic of Moldova, Sweden and Uruguay;

A/C.1/51/L.39: Lesotho;

A/C.1/51/L.40: Bangladesh, Belarus, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Panama and Paraguay;

A/C.1/51/L.42: Austria, Belgium, Congo, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.43: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Mongolia, Myanmar and Nigeria;

A/C.1/51/L.44: Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.45: Monaco;

A/C.1/51/L.46: Australia, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Finland, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Monaco, Mongolia, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkmenistan and Zaire;

A/C.1/51/L.47: Afghanistan, Iceland, Japan, Malta, Monaco and the United States of America;

In addition, there are several minor editorial changes in certain draft resolutions on which the Committee will be taking action on Monday, and I should like to read them out at this stage.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of India on a point of order.

Ms. Ghose (India): I think what we are trying to do is to get a text on which we are going to vote. There is no way in which I am going to be able to take down a revised text hurriedly and then vote on trust. It is not that I have a problem with any text. Either the Secretariat should issue a revised document or the Secretary should read out the changes extremely slowly so that we can take them down and consider them before we go to a vote. But at the

moment, I am sorry: I do not think I am in a position to listen to a changed text read out from the podium and then come back on Monday ready to vote on it.

The Chairman: I would ask the Secretary of the Committee to comment on this issue.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): In view of the comment made by the representative of India, it seems appropriate that the Secretariat should issue an information paper containing all the minor editorial changes that will not affect the substantive matter in the draft resolutions. Because of the current financial situation, reissuing a whole document because of a very minor change such as adding the article "the" would impose a substantial financial burden; therefore, we shall issue a very simple information paper that will contain these very minor changes for the proceedings next week.

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are grateful to the Secretariat for its cooperation in helping us be in a position to vote on the draft resolutions. If I have understood correctly, the Secretariat will be circulating a paper with the editorial changes. I hope that the paper will be made available in all languages and will cover all draft resolutions. My delegation, of course, would not be in a position to vote if it does not have the translation into its own language and does not know exactly what it is voting on.

The Chairman: I assure members that this information paper will be distributed in all languages.

Mr. Malzahn (United States): I was wondering if we might have some idea of what time this paper will be available tomorrow.

The Chairman: The paper will be available in the afternoon.

Ms. Ghose (India): Where will members be able to get the paper? When the Committee is not meeting, the document window in the conference room is closed; we have been having extreme difficulty in getting copies of the draft resolutions.

The Chairman: I am informed by the Secretariat that the informal document will be available tomorrow afternoon at the documents distribution centre, which is situated in the basement.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I must admit that I am now somewhat confused. We were first talking about an information document, now we are talking about some kind of informal, unofficial document. We are adopting official resolutions; this is a rather important matter. To adopt them on the basis of an unofficial document is something new in our practice.

The Chairman: The document will be an information document, not an informal document.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I know that it is late and that delegations are tired. However, please allow my delegation, in its capacity as the coordinator on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.33, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", to thank the Secretariat for all the work they have done.

I am speaking here four days after a revision was to have been made to the seventh preambular paragraph of the Arabic text. My delegation, while taking note of the revision, hopes that in the future when changes are made to draft resolutions those changes will be reflected in the documentation within 24 hours at the most. We therefore hope that the new Arabic text of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.33 will be made available very quickly.

The Chairman: The Secretariat will take note of the comment made by the representative of Algeria.

Programme of work

The Chairman (*interpretation from Russian*): In accordance with our programme of work, tomorrow we are to begin to take action on draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

I received a request today from countries of the European Union to postpone that phase of our work from tomorrow, Friday, to Monday, 11 November, in order to provide delegations with an opportunity to hold additional consultations on the draft resolutions. I have held consultations with the Secretariat and with members of the Bureau, and I should like to ask the members of the Committee to consider this postponement. We would thus begin to take action on draft resolutions in cluster 1 on Monday, 11 November.

In that connection, I should like to recall that, in accordance with the agreed schedule, we have 10 meetings

allocated for that phase of our work. With the proposed postponement, the Committee would have only eight meetings for taking action, which of course means intensive work.

I invite the views of the members of the Committee on this matter.

If there are no speakers and no other proposals, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to the proposed change in the schedule.

It was so decided.

The Chairman *(interpretation from Russian)*: I should like to recall that on Monday, we shall begin action on draft resolutions contained in cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons"; namely draft resolutions

(*spoke in English*)

A/C.1/51/L.3, L.4, L.6, L.9, L.17, L.19/Rev.1, L.21, L.23, L.27, L.28, L.30, L.37, L.39 and L.45. If time permits, the Committee will then proceed to take action on draft resolutions contained in cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction", namely draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.2, L.24, L.36, L.41, L.48 and L.49.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.